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PRESS RELEASE

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IMA-EURO Employee Mr. Frank Soares Receives White Plume Award and 50-Year-of-Sercie Pin

HEIDELBERG, Germany – The director of the Installation Management Agency – Europe (IMA-EURO), Mr. Russell B. Hall, honored Mr. Frank Soares, a longstanding civilian employee working for the Heidelberg Rod and Gun Club, for his superb performance and personal initiative with the coveted White Plume Award and a pin for 50 years of service during a ceremony at Patrick Henry Village in Heidelberg Nov. 22.

The White Plume Award is the highest award in the field of morale, welfare and recreation (MWR). It was established in June 1982 by The Adjutant General of the Army for outstanding service and contribution to the Non-Appropriated Fund Program. Less than 300 of the awards have been presented Army-wide since its inception.

Hall presented the White Plume Award to Soares to recognize his groundbreaking contributions, including community events for the greater Heidelberg Community such as the Saint Hubertus Mass at Patrick Henry Village; the most elaborate hunting course graduations including German and American dignitaries; the community's biggest Easter Egg Hunts and the oldest standing children's charity programs at Christmas and Easter for children with leukemia. This award also recognized him as the "rock" for so many soldiers and families passing through, with his wisdom and sound advice.

A native of New Bedford, Massachusetts, Soares joined the Regular Army in 1950. In 1961, Soares left the United States and came to Germany, where he served in the U.S. Army in Mannheim. After tours in the Korean and Vietnam Conflicts, Soares decided Germany would be where he'd "retire". Among a plethora of duties, Soares' time as an enlisted man saw him on the front as an infantryman, paratrooper, jump master, platoon leader, forward observer...even as a claims officer.

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FRANK SOARES

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Soares started working at the Rod and Gun Club as a volunteer in 1976. When he retired from the military in 1977, he decided he was not going to leave his new job which ignited his passion for the outdoors and he got involved in the hunting, fishing and sport shooting program. Soares saw how these American pastimes improved morale, soldier marksmanship and family life.

Soares got his German hunting license and became a hunting instructor, fishing instructor and coach, putting him in direct contact with hundreds of soldiers, civilians and family members. In 1978, he began the Hubertus Mass for the Heidelberg Community. The first Hubertus Mass drew more than 400 people to the chapel, with a hundred more standing outside in the snow. The tradition continued for the next 27 years. Money collected at the service goes to an orphanage, hospital or non-profit organization for children in need.

Soares is well known to Rod and Gun Club members, who regularly seek his advice on hunting, weapons laws, range operations and self-help projects. Former members of the Rod and Gun Club have stayed in touch with him over the years. Commanders call him "Dad," Soldiers call him "First Sergeant," his family calls him "he's at the Club," and everybody else calls him "The Godfather."

Well-known and highly respected, Mr. Soares received numerous awards during his military and civilian service including the Legion of Merit, Purple Heart, Combat Infantry Badge, and Meritorious Service Medal.

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The U.S. Army Installation Management Agency, Europe (IMA-E) is one of seven regional offices created Oct. 1, 2002, as part of an Army-wide initiative to focus management of Army installations around the world under one organization. IMA-E is responsible for all facets of support for U.S. Army Soldiers and families in Europe from driver's licenses to child care to force protection. As the landlord for all U.S. Army facilities in Europe, IMA-E is responsible for infrastructure and continuing the Army's strong commitment to environmental protection. Its higher headquarters is located in Arlington, Va.